

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A catalyst composition comprising a late transition metal held upon a support, wherein:  
  
the late transition metal is selected from the group consisting of Ru, Co, Ni, Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag and Au, and  
  
the support comprises a material of formula  $\text{Mo}_a\text{W}_{2-a}\text{C}_b\text{N}_{1-b}$  wherein  $0 < a \leq 2$  and  $0 \leq b \leq 1$ ; and  
  
the transition metal is loaded onto the support without exposing the support to air.
2. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the support comprises molybdenum carbide.
3. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the support comprises molybdenum nitride.
4. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the late transition metal comprises platinum.
5. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the late transition metal comprises nickel.

6. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the late transition metal comprises gold.
7. (original) A composition according to claim 1, wherein the catalytic composition comprises 0.1-10 % by weight of the late transition metal.
8. (original) A composition according to claim 7, comprising 0.5-5% by weight of the late transition metal.
9. (original) A composition according to claim 7, comprising 1.0-4% by weight of the late transition metal.
10. (currently amended) A catalyst composition comprising a late transition metal carried on a support, wherein
  - the transition metal is selected from the group consisting of Ru, Co, Ni, Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag and Au;
  - the support comprises molybdenum carbide or molybdenum nitride;~~and~~
  - the catalyst composition comprises 0.1-10% by weight of the transition metal;and
  - the transition metal is loaded on to the support without exposure of the support to air.
11. (original) A composition according to claim 10, wherein the support comprises molybdenum carbide.

12. (original) A composition according to claim 10, wherein the support comprises molybdenum nitride.
13. (original) A composition according to claim 10, wherein the transition metal is selected from the group consisting of platinum, nickel and gold.
14. – 21. (cancelled)
22. (currently amended) A method of preparing a supported transition metal composition comprising the steps of:
- bringing a an unpassivated solid group 6 metal carbide or nitride into contact with an aqueous solution of a late transition metal without exposing the group 6 metal carbide or nitride to air to form a system comprising solids and the supernatant;
  - separating the solids from the supernatant;
  - drying the solids; and
  - heating the solids above 200°C to produce a catalyst composition comprising the late transition metal on the group 6 metal carbide or nitride,
- wherein the group 6 metal comprises molybdenum or tungsten and the late transition metal comprises Ru, Co, Ni, Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag, or Au.

23. (original) A method according to claim 22, further comprising raising the pH of the supernatant while in contact with the solids.
24. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein raising the pH of the supernatant comprises adding carbonate salts.
25. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein the group 6 metal carbide or nitride comprises molybdenum carbide.
26. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein the late transition metal comprises platinum, nickel or gold.
27. (original) A method according to claim 22, comprising heating the solids above 400°C.
28. (currently amended) A method according to claim 22, further comprising passivating the composition by exposing it to oxygen after the heating step.
29. (currently amended) A method according to claim 22, wherein all of the steps are carried out in the absence of oxygen.